

Report on	Noise Complaint Statistics for Northern Ireland 2017/2018
Date of Meeting	2 nd December 2019
Reporting Officer	Fiona McClements

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the number and nature of noise complaints received each year by district councils across Northern Ireland. The Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy Division of the DAERA has compiled a report on noise complaint statistics for Northern Ireland 2017/2018 which has now been released. The statistics for 2018/19 are expected early 2020. The report is compiled from data supplied by district councils. The report analyses noise complaints received by all 11 councils between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018.
1.2	During this period 11,766 noise complaints were received in Northern Ireland. This was a 2.8% decrease in the total number of complaints received compared to the previous year. There has been a 7.2% increase in the number of notices served. (607 served in 2017/18 and 566 served in 2016/17). There were two prosecutions for the 2017/18 year, compared to one prosecution in 2016/17 and 2015/16 and five in 2014/15. The information in the report is an important indicator of the increasing public awareness of noise issues and the effectiveness of current noise controls. The report also allows councils to compare their noise statistics to those of neighbouring districts, to examine trends and to consider initiatives implemented by other district councils that have proved effective in increasing noise awareness or reducing noise.
2.0	Background
2.1	Articles 63 and 65 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (CNEA) give district councils the power to deal with noise from premises, including land, which they consider is prejudicial to health or amounts to a statutory nuisance. These powers apply not only to existing noise, but also where noise is expected to occur or reoccur. There is no fixed level of noise which constitutes a statutory nuisance. Individual circumstances differ and each case is judged on its merits.
2.2	In deciding whether or not a noise is sufficient to amount to a statutory nuisance, the authorised officer of the district council has to consider the reaction of the average, reasonable person to the nuisance, taking account not only of its volume, but factors such as when and how often the noise occurs and the duration of the occurrence. Where a council is satisfied that a nuisance exists, articles 63 and 65 require the district council to serve an Abatement Notice. The notice may require

	the noise to be stopped altogether or limited to certain times of the day. A notice must be served on the person responsible for the noise or if this person cannot be located, the owner or occupier of the premises. A person on whom an abatement notice is served has the right to appeal it within 21 days of being served.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	There were 11,766 noise complaints received in Northern Ireland in 2017/18. Of these complaints 6778 were received by Belfast. The Mid Ulster District received 383 noise complaints which is the second lowest figure with only Fermanagh & Omagh receiving less with 297. In general the more densely populated areas tend to receive the greatest amount of complaints.
3.2	There is an overall 2.8% decrease in the total number of complaints received compared to the previous year. There was a decrease in the numbers of noise complaint received by Mid Ulster from 438 complaints to 383. This represents a decrease of 13% in noise complaints received in the Mid Ulster District.
3.3	Mid Ulster Council had the largest number of industrial noise complaints with 26 out of a NI wide total of 144. This accounts for 18% of all industrial complaints received. This reflects the prevalence of manufacturing industry in the District. Complaints of this nature can be some of the most complex to investigate and difficult to resolve of all noise complaints.
3.4	Mid Ulster also has the most complaints regarding wind farms with a total of 7 complaints received. Animal noise was the most complained of type of noise in the district with 196 complaints received. This amounts to 51% of all complaints received. This is largely due to barking dog complaints. Interestingly despite this the volume of complaints received Mid Ulster ranked only 9 th among the district councils. Early intervention by dog enforcement officers and the promotion of barker breaker collars may account for the relatively low amount of complaints.
3.5	There were 3 Noise Abatement Notices served in the District during this year making it the joint 4 th in terms of notices served. When factored into the amount of notices served per 100 noise complaints the Mid Ulster total of 0.78 is the 4 th highest level of notice served.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: None
	Human: None
	Risk Management: None

4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None
	Rural Needs Implications: None
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members to note of the main points regarding noise complaints highlighted in this report. A copy of the DAERA report (attached at Appendix 1) will be made available to the public via the Council website.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Noise Complaint Statistics for Northern Ireland 2017/2018.